

who couldn't swim, well-to-do's and ne'er-do-well's. The only thing they had in common was that when they started flight school they all didn't know how to fly. Jim Daniels remembers that, and I quote, "It didn't matter. We had a job to do, and we had to do it together."

On August the 15th, 1945, the very last day of World War II, Jim Daniels was in the air again. It was a picture-perfect South Pacific morning. Then the word crackled over the radio: The enemy had surrendered; come on down. And so Jim Daniels, the American who flew on the first day and on the last day of our Nation's war, turned toward home.

Today, Jim Daniels and his wife of 55 years, Helen, are here with us today. I'd like to ask them to stand. Mr. and Mrs. Daniels. *[Applause]* Bless you.

And I would like to ask all the veterans of World War II who are here today to stand and be recognized or to wave and be recognized. Please stand up. *[Applause]*

On August the 15th, 1945, when Jim Daniels brought his plane down he descended through the clouds, along with all the other Americans in uniform, not toward a dark night of uncertainty but toward a bright future of hope, blessed by peace, graced by prosperity, a future in which more Americans than ever before would have the opportunity to live the lives God meant for them to have. It was a future won by a remarkable generation who found unity in war and built us a half century of progress in peace.

Now, my fellow Americans, we stand at the dawn of a new century and their challenge has become ours. Their spirit must be ours as well. We pledge to carry on their work. And we vow to remember Jim Daniels' words, "We have a job to do, and we have to do it together." For us, as for them, the future depends upon it.

May God bless the Americans who brought us to this day, and may God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:21 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Lewis H. Wilson, USMC (Ret.), former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; Rev. Kenneth D. Perkins, Rabbi Morris Goldfarb, and Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, who gave the invocations; Gov. Benjamin J. Cayetano of Hawaii; and Mayor Jeremy Harris of Honolulu.

The President's Radio Address

September 2, 1995

Good morning. On this Labor Day weekend, I am paying tribute to some of the most important labor ever performed on behalf of the American people. Hillary and I are in Hawaii, where we have gathered with veterans of World War II to honor the bravery and sacrifice of an extraordinary generation of Americans.

Fifty years ago today, freedom triumphed over tyranny because those brave men and women, along with their colleagues from the allied nations, won a victory for freedom in the great struggle of World War II. America and the entire world will forever be in their debt.

So when the veterans of World War II came home, America was ready to pay its debt to our soldiers. Even before the war ended, President Roosevelt had already signed the GI bill into law. The GI bill opened the doors to college for veterans and helped them to get a start on life with a new home. And because our Nation provided that kind of opportunity for the World War II veterans, the opportunity to build good lives for themselves and their families, they in turn were able to play an enormous part in making our Nation the strongest and most prosperous on Earth.

Today, our challenge is to build on the foundation they laid, to keep our Nation strong and to give all Americans the opportunity to make the most of their own lives as we move into the 21st century.

A central part of that challenge is our effort to balance the Federal budget, to relieve future generations of Americans of the crushing debt burden imposed almost entirely in the 12 years before I took office. During that 12-year period, our national debt quadrupled. In 1993, in our administration's economic program, we passed the bill that cut the deficit from \$290 billion a year all the way down to \$160 billion in just 3 years. In fact, our budget would be balanced today but for the debt run up in the 12 years before I became President.

Well, now we all have to go the rest of the way to balance that budget. But how we do it will say a lot about the values we have

as a people and how we understand what's in our interest as we move to the next century. I have a good plan to balance the budget. But it will also give every American the opportunity to build a good life for himself or herself and to build better futures for their families.

Our plan will give our children the best possible education. It will keep our streets safer. It will take care of our elderly. It will maintain the purity and clarity of our environment. And it will maintain the strength of our Armed Forces.

Our plan also will keep faith with the men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms that we now hold dear. For over 50 years, all Americans who joined our military have known that they are making a bargain with America and that in return for their service to our country our country will stand by them. The young men and women who serve today in our military give us some of the best years of their lives. And one of the things we tell them is that the longer they serve our country, the more our country will owe them when their service is done.

Amazingly, there are those today who believe that in order to balance the budget it's all right to break our commitment to a group of more than 800,000 men and women who've already served for at least 15 years. Now when these people joined the armed services, they were told that their retirement pay would be based on whatever salary they were earning the day they retired. But now in the name of balancing the budget, some propose that we scale back their retirement pay in a way that will mean cuts for retired military personnel of as much as \$200 a month.

But I disagree. I believe that after asking so much of these men and women our country should keep its commitment to them and find a better path to balance the budget. I have a plan to balance the budget that doesn't break our commitment to those who serve us in uniform. I think that kind of broken commitment is unconscionable. And as long as I'm President, we're not going to break our word to the members of our Armed Forces or our veterans.

For the last 50 years, our Nation has kept commitments to veterans who fought and won World War II, those whom we honor here in Hawaii and all across America this weekend, and to the veterans who followed them. That's a big reason that we now have the finest military in the world, outstanding and brave men and women who understand the duty they owe to one another, their communities, to our country, and to the world. I think we have an obligation to them. You know, they give up a lot to serve us, a lot in time and money. But one of the things they get in return is a commitment on retirement, a reward for the work—the important work they do.

So on this Labor Day weekend when we honor the work of all Americans, let us, all of us, recommit ourselves to the legacy of World War II, to the men and women in uniform today, and to our obligations to them.

Hillary and I wish all of you a wonderful Labor Day weekend. Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:25 p.m. on September 1 at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu, HI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 2.

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony on Board the U.S.S. *Carl Vinson* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
September 2, 1995

Thank you very much. Thank you Admiral Fluckey, for your kind words and far more for your astonishing service to our country. Secretary Dalton, Secretary Perry, Secretary Brown, Admiral Boorda, Admiral Macke, Admiral Zlatoper, Admiral Moorer, Admiral Moore, Captain Baucom, to all the distinguished veterans who are here from the United States Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine; to the crew of the U.S.S. *Carl Vinson*: It's good to be back. I was on board in San Francisco in August of 1993, and now I have two of these caps which I can proudly wear around the United States.

Fifty years ago today, on the other side of this Pacific Ocean, the war ended. It was a war that erupted in smoke and horror